

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

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Contents

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT	Page 182
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Page 183
PRONOUNCEMENTS	Page 184
VALUATIONS	Page 186
THE AMERICAN SCENE	Page 189
CATERING FOR THE ADOLESCENT	Page 192
NEW MEMBERS.	Page 195
OUR BOOKSHELF	Page 196
CORRESPONDENCE	Page 197
THE DIVISIONS.	Page 198

The Library Assistant SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

THE co-operative bulletin for public libraries has been a much-discussed project for many many years. Possibilities have been seen, and have seemed at times to be turning into probabilities, but not near enough for anything concrete to emerge. The co-operative bulletin has remained material for the young iconoclast to sharpen his sword on when attacking the lack of vision of his elders. It is easy to point out the need for anything ; it is less easy to make the thing. There have been two obstacles in the way of the bulletin. The major one has been the difficulty of persuading all libraries to buy the same books. The minor one has been the difficulty of persuading them that a central agency can produce a better and cheaper bulletin than they can produce themselves. Once over those two difficulties, and the production of a bulletin becomes merely a matter of initiative.

Recommended books, which will be issued as a supplement to THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT for an experimental period commencing next month, is a step towards a co-operative bulletin. The first difficulty has been overcome by including a minimum of books, in fact, only ten or twelve. The number of outstanding books issued each month is few ; by making the selection small and including only books for the general reader, it is hoped that even the smallest library will find that the books mentioned are those which it would buy as a matter of course.

The second difficulty has been evaded. *Recommended books* is definitely experimental. It is designed to supply a need for small libraries and to supplement existing guides in large ones. It begins as a small pamphlet of four pages. If there is a need for a co-operative bulletin, it will enlarge itself. If the experiment fails, valuable data will have been acquired for future iconoclasts.

Recommended books will be issued as a supplement to THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. Copies will also be available for sale to public libraries for distribution or sale to readers, with the name of the particular library on the cover. The price fixed bears no proportion of composing costs, being the cost of paper and printing only, and in our opinion it is very low indeed. Librarians and others interested are asked to write to the editor of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, who will be pleased to give further details.

The Library Assistant

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE Inaugural Meeting of the 1934-5 session of the Association of Assistant Librarians will be held at the London School of Economics on Wednesday, 10th October, 1934, at 6.30 p.m., and the address will be given by Miss Helen Simpson. It is hoped that the President of the Library Association will be in the chair.

The full programme for the session is as follows :

7th November.—Joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at Leytonstone Branch Library.

Debate : "That public libraries are unnecessary."

Proposer : F. M. Gardner, F.L.A. (Willesden).

Opposer : T. I. M. Clulow (Kingston).

12th December.—At Mitcham Public Library.

Round-table conference on library methods.

1. "Service counters." Opened by H. Wilson (Leyton).

2. "Cataloguing." Opened by F. Fordham (Edmonton).

3. "Records on cards." Opened by Miss I. Kennedy (Ilford).

9th January, 1935.—Joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at Edmonton Public Library.

Speaker : R. D. Hilton Smith, F.L.A.

Subject : "Things seen in America."

13th February.—At Chaucer House.

Speaker and subject to be selected by the South Wales Division.

13th March.—Joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at Chaucer House. Exhibition of plans of new library buildings within the Home Counties, explained by the librarians responsible.

10th April.—At Chaucer House.

Debate : "That public libraries have suffered from the intervention of charitable bodies and outside institutions."

Proposer : B. Bennett, F.L.A. (Hornsey).

Opposer : S. W. Anderson, A.L.A. (Croydon).

8th May.—At Hayes.

Visit to the works of the Gramophone Company. Followed by meeting.

Subject : "County libraries in 1950."

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The Library Assistant

In addition to the above, arrangements are going forward for a full programme of informal evenings at Chaucer House on Wednesdays. Any individuals or library staffs who are willing to co-operate with the council in these events are asked to communicate with Mr. Pugsley, Branch Library, High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford.

The programme of the 1934 L.A. Conference, which has just been issued, is a very full and tempting one. Meetings specially interesting to our readers will be the two allotted to the A.A.L. section. The first is on Tuesday, 11th September, at 5.15 p.m., in the gymnasium of University College, when Mr. F. Seymour Smith, F.L.A., will speak on "Professional literature: a survey." The second will be on Wednesday, 12th September, at the same time and place, and the speaker will be Mr. G. P. Jackson, A.L.A., on "Library publicity." We hope that all members who can will be at these two sessions.

The eleventh annual conference of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux will be held at Somerville College, Oxford, from 21st September to 24th September, 1934. Full particulars of the conference may be obtained from Mr. E. M. R. Ditmas, General Secretary, "Aslib," 16 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

The Council of the North-Western Branch of the Library Association wish to ascertain what demand there is for a course of lectures in advanced library administration (Final, pt. III). It is proposed to hold the lectures at the Manchester Municipal College of Technology. Students desiring to enter such a course should communicate without delay with J. W. Singleton, F.L.A., Public Library, Accrington.

Members are reminded that the last date of entry for the December 1934 Preliminary Examination is the 18th September, 1934.

PRONOUNCEMENTS

INNOVATION in the planning of lending library charging counters is sufficiently rare to invest with particular interest a new form of charge introduced by Mr. Gordon in the Leeds Central Lending Library, which has recently been reorganized. The charging trays are arranged on a turn-

The Library Assistant

table consisting of a circular top, five feet in diameter, revolving on a rigid pedestal with heavy lino-covered splayed base. Two of these turn-tables are placed close to each other inside a counter, which is divided so that borrowers with surnames A-L have their books discharged at one, and those with surnames M-Z at the other. Wickets have been abolished, as they are considered unnecessary. Two counter assistants are required, one for each turn-table, although they are close enough together to allow for one assistant to operate both in slack periods. The assistant sits at the turn-table, takes up the books as they are handed in at the counter, and swings the charge round to the date required. Books as discharged are placed on a truck ready for clearing. The turn-table is so situated that the assistant can reach books from the counter, operate the revolving portion, and deposit discharged books on the truck without movement other than that provided by the swivel chair on which she sits. No fatigue to the assistant is caused by the operation of the turn-table, as it swings round noiselessly at a touch. Waste of space in arranging the trays on a circular table is avoided by alternating long and short trays.

The exit counter, at which books are stamped out, is in another part of the room.

The experience so far indicates that there is a considerable speeding up in the discharging process, and this may reasonably be expected to improve still more as assistants become more expert in the manipulation of the new charge. The advantage to the assistants, who are now able to sit down at the counter, is one which is very much appreciated.

In considering the possible extension of the use of this form of charge, two factors must be taken into account: (a) that only one assistant can operate each turn-table at a time, so that no more than two assistants can be used for discharging purposes; (b) that three assistants are immobilized—two at the charges and one at the exit counter. As regards (a), the speeding up obtained so far indicates that together the charges will cope efficiently with daily issues of up to 3,500; (b) would make its adoption for libraries issuing less than about 1,500 a day uneconomic. For libraries recording issues between these limits a charge of this type can be confidently recommended.

J. T. G.

The *Occupation tables of the census of England and Wales, 1931* (H.M.S.O., 30s.), look on first sight to be an indigestible mass of statistics weighing several pounds: a little study from a professional standpoint is well repaid, however.

The Library Assistant

The first thing to be noticed is the remarkable increase in the number of librarians since 1921. At that time there were 2,142; in 1931 there were 6,189. The term "Librarians" does not include booksellers and, since these are 1931 figures, will not include the many workers in the circulating libraries that have sprung up since that date.

The tremendous influx of women to the profession is very marked—in 1921 there were 832 compared to 1,310 males; in 1931 there were 3,439, and only 2,750 males. Is librarianship becoming a woman's profession, we ask? Another glance at the figures proves that the men have the staying power, however: only 264 female librarians are over 45, while there are over 900 males. Presumably marriage claims most of them, for librarians seem to live longer than most other professional men—I was astonished to find 29 of us were over 75.

Those who complain that our profession is dominated by the aged will be astonished to find that 43 per cent. of male librarians are under 30, and nearly 73 per cent. of the women belong to the same age group.

The total number of ordinary members of the Library Association in 1934 was 2,929. There are 6,189 librarians in England and Wales alone. It will be seen that we have a long way to go before we are united in a solid body with 100 per cent. membership.

W. B. S.

VALUATIONS

T. E. CALLANDER

I HESITATE this month between two claimants for the laurels. These laurels are, as my readers know, awarded to librarians sending for review publications which are not in every respect exactly similar to a hundred other library pamphlets. (The depression in the laurel industry is terrible.) My two claimants are Altrincham and Mansfield, and Altrincham very nearly walks away with the prize. It sends a pamphlet called the *Altrincham Monthly Circular*, the official organ of the public libraries and museums. Frankly, I only picked this from my pile because my mood was carping and vindictive, and I felt that I could type myself into a sunnier frame of mind by saying unkind things about the revolting appearance of the *Circular*. But when I read through it my heart leapt. It has been shown in these pages that there is a sacred formula for the production of a library bulletin, and that the essential of the

The Library Assistant

formula is a list of books. It may be a short list or a long list, a list adorned with sprightly annotations or a solid, suety, respectable list. These factors vary, but the list endures. But not at Altrincham. Here we have instead a rather hearty editorial; a half page of greetings from Miss Ethel Mannin, that darling of the sex starved; a message from Mr. J. S. Fletcher; several items of local history; a gossip column; a book article; and notes on two novelists. No list. The result is refreshing, so refreshing that I am ready to believe that the *Altrincham Monthly Circular* achieves all the objects of its begetter, though as to what those objects may be I would not venture an opinion. Two things would improve this pamphlet. The first, moderately attractive format, would help a lot. The second, a more critical taste when recommending books. My observation is prompted by a page headed *Notable novelists*. Beneath this caption a half page each is devoted to Margaret Pedler and to Sydney Horler. Mr. Horler is no doubt a notable man in many ways, but hardly as a novelist, and one could suggest a better use of a page than this.

Altrincham is good, but my highest praise is reserved for Mansfield. Mansfield sends an annual report and a list of books *For the housewife*, both of them produced on a rotary duplicator. Produced is hardly the word perhaps. Created is more apt, for these are very paragons of duplicating. I commend them very seriously to all those librarians who in their publishing are handicapped by lack of funds or by the limitations and abominations of a jobbing printer. It is high praise but deserved to say that they compare very favourably in appearance with Rugby's *New books*, a newcomer distinguished by its excellent printing.

Croydon sends a remarkably comprehensive list of books on *Scouting and guiding*. Its contents are all that one would expect from a library of the standing of Croydon, but its production is not first class. Sans types are a snare for the unwary, and not everyone who says "No serifs" shall enter into the kingdom. Particularly not anyone who for the sake of tradition makes a page spotty with authors in bold face. Fulham's *Readers' guide* gives little opportunity for praise or blame. Sober, righteous and godly are the appropriate adjectives for the July to September issue. The same may do double service for Willesden's *Reading, July, 1934*, coupled with a due appreciation of an article on recent fiction and a cover design which makes a gallant effort. Croydon's *Readers' index, July-August*, contains interesting notes on library activities and an impeccable list of additions. I earnestly hope that some day I shall be privileged to unite Messrs. Sayers and Snaith in some snug bar where

The Library Assistant

they may discuss the gentle art of annotations. Mr. Sayers has addressed some pertinent words on this subject to Mr. Snaith and others in his *First steps in annotation of catalogues*, but surely if Mr. Snaith were given a chance he could convert him to something a little more lively than the notes in this issue of the *Readers' index*. "Author is prof. of zoology, Bristol Univ." "Bibliog., 2 pp. bb"—"For the general reader"—"Bibliogs."—"Travel in Guatemala and Mexico"—this last for *Beyond the Mexique Bay*. As *Mehitabel* would have it, wothehell wothehell wothehell.

Annual reports. Mr. Creed conserves his energies. The Fulham *Readers' guide*, like most signposts, is a little stark, but the Fulham *Annual Report*, 1933-34, is definitely readable. It has a provocative paragraph on tuppenny libraries, Mr. Creed showing that he can take his decline in issues like a man and without putting forward any of those unpalatable theories about the return to employment or the influence of the war years on the birth rate with which we are nowadays too often regaled. *Leicester* reports a substantial increase in loans and looks forward to further success in its reconstructed central library. *Walthamstow, Ipswich and Devon County* are doing well. Thus, cautiously, I approach the third annual report of the West Midlands Regional Library Bureau. Cautiously because Mr. Cashmore is an ill man with whom to cross swords, and furthermore has a bevy of shorthand typists to transcribe telling but lengthy letters to his opponents, whereas I have to type these articles myself. Anything that I may say about this report is therefore said with the utmost deference, a conviction of sin, and an anticipatory apology. I have always assumed that the guiding principle of all regional schemes is that of co-operation. To each according to his needs and from each as he is able and fair do's all round. And yet of 3,731 books lent through the West Midlands Regional Bureau during 1933-34, 3,187, or 85.42 per cent. of the total were lent by Birmingham. *C'est magnifique, mais . . .* Can a library which lends 2 books and borrows 165, or which sets off 2 loans against 125 books borrowed, or which simply borrows 162 books without making any loans—can these libraries be described as co-operating, however liberally one interprets the term co-operation. There are less flattering terms which seem to me more apt. I, with most other librarians, would prefer to avoid discussions of the achievements of the regional bureaux, but surely these figures are a matter for some concern, not so much for the ultimate success of co-operation but at a vision of the library stocks which necessitate and give rise to borrowing of this kind.

The Library Assistant

THE AMERICAN SCENE

RALPH C. ULEVELING

AMERICA is, and for some time has been, conscious that changes in its social fabric are impending. The first large recognition given this thought was the preparation of a colossal study brought out during the Hoover Administration under the title *Recent social trends*. Since that time the Roosevelt "New Deal" has made strong efforts to rehabilitate our national life by building along new lines. As a result of these advances considerable speculation has been expended on the probable character of things to come.

In keeping with the general trend, the American Library Association early in 1934 attempted a long look into the future with a view to laying plans now for marching forward with the new social developments and expanding the usefulness of libraries by 1954. That no concrete plan with fixed goals has yet developed from these probings is not surprising. The nature of the problem condemns that type of solution. From the varied suggestions projected, some of which appeared in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* for March 1934, a few generalizations become apparent, however.

Greater social consciousness on the part of all professional workers is reflected as fundamental to any hoped-for improvement. One librarian predicts that we must go back to the unit of society, the family, and lay our foundations for serving the home. The successive specializations which in time have developed—children's work, schools' work, and lastly adult education—each have their merits, but they fail to recognize the unity of interest which binds all three with a common bond. Due to this lack of correlation, they fail to parallel the complete pattern of an individual's daily life. Just how this change can be accomplished if it should be done, I fail to recognize, so I rest the problem.

Others preface with the desirability of integrating the library more closely into the life of the community. They feel that, rather than develop institutions which in proud isolation can claim their proportionate share of the citizenry's time and attention, libraries should interlock so closely with the social and cultural life roundabout that persons in the pursuit of other bents will automatically be brought to share in the library's liberalizing influence.

The second trend centres around governmental set-ups which would make possible an equalized and more widespread distribution of library service

The Library Assistant

throughout the nation, even while reducing the number of independent administrative units. This plan contemplates a realignment and centralizing of administration based on natural population and geographical unity rather than on the artificial local political boundaries that now govern. Advantages are quickly apparent, but opposed to these is the danger of over-centralization with its concomitant loss of the necessary close relationship between the institution and the user.

The third great group of predictions was perhaps the most spectacular but the least vital at the moment of all forecasts. They pertained either to the application of scientific achievements—radio, television, film photography, etc.—or to shortened and startlingly reorganized technical processes, as elimination of card catalogues of the type we now consider basic. Such predictions, however, can scarcely be thought of as directly associated with social changes. Rather, they are developments which are likely to come irrespective of the nature of the social order prevailing. Nevertheless, it is better they were enunciated than left unsaid, for potentialities of this sort emphasize the need for continually thinking in terms of the future rather than of the present.

The last and perhaps the most important group of desired changes focused on the library personnel. Concerned with factors which are within our comprehension at the present, these recommendations, nevertheless, are directed towards the life blood of the future. It is difficult to conceive of any type of progress that does not have for its motivating force the people who operate our institutions. With a warning that the tonics prescribed below are for selected rather than universal application, let me enumerate briefly a few of the points listed.

Foremost is the fact that in selecting professional workers the applicants' paramount interest should be people rather than books. There is no intention on the part of this group to discredit or minimize the importance of a broad cultural background, but they recognize the fact that in social work, such as library service, the acquisitive mind is frequently far less of an influence on our fellow-men than is that of another worker who may be less scholarly but who, recognizing each patron as an individual human detached from the mass, gives eagerly and graciously of his talents.

Another point, only slightly removed, is a reiteration of an old truism which as yet has not found universal acceptance except perhaps in principle, namely, librarians individually must share in and contribute to the community activities about them, if they are to advance the service they represent. The

The Library Assistant

most fruitful contacts are often casually made. Because of this, libraries can ill afford to include in their staffs retiring persons who barricade themselves from the flow of human interests behind a shelter of books. Too frequently such persons fail to recognize themselves as the kin of the caricatured librarian who stands on a high ladder engrossed in musty tomes. Such people lack the understanding without which their work can never be eminently successful except as a bibliographer or a technician.

With respect to training and education, much can be said. Emphasis on universal reading with its attendant superficiality is deplored. It will be far better, says one library school director, for librarians "to embrace the literature of some subject field and to keep abreast of the changes in it. In a choice it will be well for some to be satisfied with only a fair knowledge of the humanities, the classics, and literature as such, for the fields of the social sciences, particularly economics and government, will be of increasing importance in the future, with biological sciences, including here anthropology and psychology, of next importance in many libraries." Added to this is a growing demand for heavy emphasis on applied psychology, with particular regard for developing skill in interviewing.

Last to be mentioned is a procession of personal traits without which any worker is deficient. For survival we must have adaptability, a characteristic too often lacking to-day, while for progress we must have initiative, critical approach combined with receptiveness, aggressiveness, wider interests and contacts, imagination, ideas, and alertness.

In concluding, let me admit before I am charged with gross omissions that this review of ideas and plans brought forward is both sketchy and inadequate. Many cherished hopes that someone may, for years, have pushed with missionary zeal have probably been lost sight of. I may even have moved in my own shadow. In either event my censure can be increased by little, even though I carry the crime further and attempt evaluation without waiting for a long perspective. Summarizing then, it would seem that little of true value can be achieved by trying to lay out our quarters in a great projected structure before the structure has taken shape. If this be true, then Mr. Sydney B. Mitchell, in his address on "Personnel in relation to significant trends," has pointed the way for our first efforts when he says that "new times call for new characteristics, new capacities, and if we cannot find or develop them, our libraries will become merely vestigial organs in the educational bodies of the future."

The Library Assistant

CATERING FOR THE ADOLESCENT¹

SIDNEY W. ANDERSON

“ **O**NE of the most surprising features of modern librarianship is the apparent lack of attention paid to the problem of guiding and catering for the reading needs of the young person who has just attained the critical age of 14 years. We have our junior libraries ; we have our adult libraries ; where is the necessary bridge between the two ?” It was in an attempt to find the answer to this question that I entered into correspondence with librarians in this country and elsewhere last summer, and visited what appears to be the only firmly established “ Intermediate ” library in England—that at Walthamstow. If there are other places which make a special feature of this important work, it is time that the details were collected and published for the benefit of the profession, instead of remaining hidden in the mass of annual reports which flock to the writer of “ Valuations ” every year. Since the idea of writing this series of articles occurred to me, at least two of the professional journals have been toying with the subject, whilst at the third and final of the A.A.L. meetings dealing with “ The Library and the community ” it was suggested by the chairman that many of the possibilities of developing our service to attract the proletariat depended upon the impression we made on the generation now developing, i.e. the adolescents. So the time seems ripe for a survey of what has been and is being done, and for a discussion of future policy. The whole subject is as provocative as it is important, and if this series does no more than to evoke some solid constructive criticisms or suggested alternatives to the methods outlined later on, the writer will feel more than satisfied. It is only by gathering together and comparing representative opinions that we can hope to reach a long-overdue decision about this vital aspect of our work.

Before setting out to show past and present achievements I propose weighing up the pros and cons of what I shall henceforth refer to as Intermediate provision. To take the cons first. An admirable summary of these has appeared in a report to which I am much indebted, that issued by the Walthamstow Public Libraries five years after the Intermediate section was opened there.² The report says :

¹ *A series of three articles.*

² *A list of sources quoted will be given at the end of the series.*

The Library Assistant

"The experiment was not without its critics in municipal library circles. Whilst in some quarters it was considered an unnecessary departure, in others it was questioned because of the overlapping in selection which would arise. Perhaps the major objection was that the proposal would, to some extent, determine what the young people should read and thus debar from them that wider and unrestricted range of reading offered in the general and adult sections of the libraries."

With regard to its being "an unnecessary departure" I will make only one comment, and that shall be in the form of an anecdote. Discussing reading tastes with a Junior librarian of many years' experience one day, I asked her if she felt that Intermediate provision was superfluous. "Indeed, no," she replied. "Only a short time ago one of my borrowers who has belonged to the Junior library for years reached the age of 14, and intimated that she would be leaving me for the Adult library now. I made no comment. Within a week she came back and asked if I could recommend any books in my stock suitable for her age, as she was absolutely at sea in the Adult library. I did so, and she has not been near the Adult library since." The girl in this instance had the intelligence, or the courage if you prefer it, to ask for help. Many in the same position would simply have continued "at sea" in the Adult library, or more likely have left the place altogether.

Overlapping in selection is the obvious hobby-horse which opponents of our subject always ride. It is very true that the range of books suitable for the Intermediate department *only* is comparatively narrow. It is fairly simple to avoid duplication, however. As I shall show in my third article, the resources of both the Junior and the Adult libraries can be made available to Intermediate readers when necessary, and vice versa. At the same time, this does not prove that a separate Intermediate stock, in a room of its own, is redundant, as some assume. Sink this stock in those of the Junior and Adult libraries, and the young people who would use it are lost in a mass of bewilderment, as has been demonstrated. But to return to the question of duplication. Walthamstow met this difficulty by enlisting the aid of the local teachers and of the publishing houses, coupling this with "the practical knowledge of a library staff bent upon mastering the problem." The result was an original stock of 4,000 volumes which has since grown to more than 6,000. Whilst some of these books are also in the Junior library, the duplication is one which would probably have been necessary in the ordinary way

The Library Assistant

where popular books were concerned. All that it amounts to is that the second copy has been placed in the Intermediate stock instead of along with its fellows.

The argument about restricting the range of young people's reading can be nullified by ensuring the inter-availability of the stocks and by endeavouring to make the Intermediate section a miniature library in itself. This last is not easy, but it can be done, as will be seen later.

So much for the objections. Now for the pros. The "gap" in reading tastes which occurs at the age of 14 is one of the strongest arguments in favour of Intermediate provision. This is most serious where the elementary school child is concerned. Let me quote Walthamstow again : "The mere fact that at 14 years of age a great proportion of elementary school children pass out of the control of the local education authority has to be recognized." Yes, and if it is not, such children will, in nine cases out of ten, lose the reading habit which the Junior library has been at such pains to inculcate, and subsist for the rest of their lives on Sunday newspapers (*not* the *Observer*) and magazines of the more sensational (or more sensual) kind. Methods of retaining these future citizens as readers will be discussed presently : the point is that we must prevent the leakage. Unless our libraries see that the right books get into the hands of the rising generation at this crucial age, they are jeopardizing their own chances of future survival.

Much controversy has raged around the question of whether the librarian should look upon it as a part of his duty to raise the standard of reading, and to promote a higher level of culture, as the B.B.C. seems to be attempting. Those in favour seem to be despairing at the apparent inconvertibility of the confirmed Dellite and Wallacean. The root of the trouble lies in the fact that these people were given no opportunity of forming decent reading tastes in their most susceptible years, and that it is a hundred times more difficult to break new ground when they have reached middle age. The new generation has a much better chance. It is growing up with broadcasting and in an age of unprecedented educational opportunities. Libraries are playing their part in this renaissance. New ideas, new buildings, are arousing public interest. This is all to the good. *But we must remember it is the young people now in their 'teens who will "matter" in the future, when some of our ambitious plans are realized.* Therefore, it behoves us to arouse and maintain their interest, and to lay the solid foundations of a widespread reading habit. The surest way of doing this seems to be that of paying greater attention to the

The Library Assistant

adolescent reader than in the past. It will mean greater expense and a possible curtailment of funds at present available for the purchase of the Adult book-stock. Whether or not it is worth while is for individual librarians and committees to judge. What we really need is a few more library committees with the pioneering spirit possessed by their American counterparts.

As a conclusion to the theoretical consideration of this subject, I would recommend all who can to turn up *The Library journal*, vol. 55 (15th November, 1930), pp. 911-14. Here will be found a stimulating article by Miss Sarah A. Beard, entitled "The Adolescent challenge." Miss Beard is in charge of the Intermediate Department at the Brownsville Children's Branch of the Brooklyn, New York, Public Library, and she writes with sympathetic understanding of the problems that have to be faced in dealing with readers in their 'teens. One of her maxims runs thus: "Although it is a wise policy for all ages, we should treat particularly the adolescent borrower as an individual." Another American librarian, Mrs. M. H. Willert, is working towards the same goal from an entirely different angle (see *The Library journal*, vol. 57 (15th October, 1932), pp. 842-5, "The Public library and specialized work with young people").

In the next article I shall give details of the American methods, partly because of their intrinsic interest, and partly because they could probably be adapted for use in this country. But we have to remember that the American outlook on library work is essentially different from ours, even if the ideals are the same. For instance, the grading system in vogue in their Junior libraries would not work in this country. The number of "Clubs" which they organize in connexion with the various sections of the library would overwhelm us. Allowing, then, for national and temperamental differences, let us see how America keeps its youth "well read."

(To be continued.)

NEW MEMBERS

CENTRAL.—C. W. Collins (Canterbury University College, Christchurch, N.Z.).

North-Eastern Division.—Doris Robson (Durham County).

North-Western Division.—Miss M. Gough (Sale).

Yorkshire Division.—Miss M. L. Jackson (Scarborough).

Resignations.—L. E. Thornton (Derby); I. K. Watkinson (Manchester).

The Library Assistant OUR BOOKSHELF

Brebner, J. B., and others. *Classics of the western world. With forewords by John Erskine and Everett Dean Martin. Second edition revised. 1934. Chicago, A.L.A. § 1.*

THIS book is a guide to reading. It consists of select lists of works by and on seventy-four outstanding literary figures, from Homer to Freud, in chronological order, together with lists for the Old and New Testaments. Each list consists of recommended and additional books by the author in question and supplementary criticism and biography. I cannot help feeling that the solid masses of supplementary works may tend to overbalance the essential emphasis on the author's own works. The great danger of reading about a classic is that one often fails to read the original, a danger implied in Mr. Martin's foreword. In the present work there are, for example, twelve books on Rabelais to offset his *Gargantua*, the reading of which is the golden key to the door of the Renaissance. Even if one reads the original first, there is no slight risk that an extensive study of commentary may spoil the palate for a second reading. The student of literature is often the worst enemy of literature.

The value of the reading lists varies considerably. It is difficult to understand why Bacon's *Advancement of learning* and *New Atlantis* are recommended, while the essays are only additional. Not even the powerful impetus of an approaching examination in classification could drive me through the *Advancement*. Surely Joseph Andrews should be included in the recommended Fielding, while that dreadful novel *Amelia* is best forgotten altogether. For Homer the translations recommended are Lang, Way, Butler, and Palmer. Chapman and Worsley are omitted. Yet, while the reading of Lang is barely an event, Chapman is, for the modern reader, no less an experience than he was for Keats. I can visualize a reader becoming more interested in Dickens after reading Chesterton's study, but the next step to Forster interest is most unlikely to have the desired result. Wragg's edition of the Psalms is now essential. But the inclusion of Young's *Gibbon*, one of the best of Mr. Davies' five-shilling biographies, Gilbert Murray's *Aristophanes*, and William Morris's translation of the *Volsunga Saga*, is excellent.

"While the readings have been planned primarily for college students, the A.L.A. is glad to offer them to public libraries and to the general reader." This fact probably accounts for the very formal arrangement of the book,

The Library Assistant

which is intensified by format and lack of adequate annotation. If used by an experienced librarian, the book will be useful in assisting readers. I shudder to think of its possible influence in the hands of a junior assistant or an ordinary reader.

W. A. MUNFORD.

CORRESPONDENCE

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THE HON. EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

9th August, 1934.

DEAR SIR,—

Permit me to congratulate you on the very enlightened direction of your excellent journal. A characteristic youthfulness, which quite naturally forms the keynote of many of the contributions, is indeed refreshing, and I find that one is invariably more than repaid for the time spent in perusal. Particularly do I appreciate the classic simplicity of your pages, and bearing in mind the blatant commercialism of other journals, I am definitely of opinion that the respect paid by your journal to true craftsmanship is worthy of widespread support.

It is for this reason that I owe you an expression of sincere thanks. In the editorial notes of your January issue you draw attention to the use of Gill Sans type, and profiting by these remarks, I immediately began to consider the application of this type to library binding. The master-letters have now been cut and mounted, and within a very short time I shall be in possession of this type for use on public library work.

Furthermore, so far as the type-cutters are concerned, they inform me that mine will be the first delivery of Gill Sans for this particular purpose from their firm, and because of this I accord THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT full credit for contributing in no small measure to the elevation of the craft standard.

Yours faithfully,

T. A. CAWTHORNE.

[This letter was originally sent for anonymous publication. We publish the writer's name as a matter of professional interest.—ED.]

The Library Assistant THE DIVISIONS

EASTERN DIVISION

A MEETING of the Eastern Division was held at Cambridge on Thursday, 31st May, by invitation of the Cambridge Public Library Committee.

A visit was first made to the Pepys Library, where the methods of arranging the book-cases and the catalogue of Samuel Pepys were explained. Following this, the Trinity College Library was visited, where the arrangement of the library was explained by a member of the Trinity College staff, and an exhibition of clay tablets, manuscripts, and early and later printing was examined. It had been hoped to visit the new University Library building, but it was unfortunately not possible to obtain more than a view of the exterior.

The meeting was arranged by Mr. L. Chubb, F.L.A., the chairman of the Division, and was conducted by Mr. W. A. Fenton, M.A., F.L.A., the Borough Librarian of Cambridge.

F. B.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION

The Annual Meeting of the South-Eastern Division was held under perfect weather conditions at Eastbourne on Friday, 6th July, the Eastbourne Libraries' Staff arranging a most enjoyable programme. Leaving the Central Library by char-à-banc, members visited Polegate, Wilmington, Alfriston, and Beachy Head, where a short stay was made. The party then proceeded to the Winter Garden for a tea dance, by kind invitation of Alderman Keay, the Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee.

The Business Meeting was held at the Seaside Branch Library, and was presided over by Mr. Wilfred Hynes, F.L.A., the Borough Librarian of Eastbourne. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts were presented and adopted unanimously.

The appointment of officers and committee for the ensuing year was announced :

President : Mr. W. Law (Brighton).

Hon. Treasurer : Mr. E. Male (Brighton).

Hon. Secretary : Miss G. Dean (Worthing).

Hon. Auditors : Miss E. Young, A.L.A., and Miss K. Mardall (Brighton).

The Library Assistant

Committee (consisting of one member from each library in the area) : Miss E. Young (Brighton), Mr. A. Hamblin (Eastbourne), Miss E. M. Clarke (Hastings), Miss E. M. Talmey (Hove), Mr. G. Trower (Lewes), Mr. R. Rowsell (East Sussex), Miss E. J. Carnell (West Sussex), Miss E. Gerard (Worthing).

A paper on "We librarians," dealing with outlook and educational equipment of the modern librarian, written by Miss E. J. Carnell (Bognor Regis), was then read. Hearty votes of thanks to Alderman Keay, Miss Carnell, Mr. Hynes, and the Eastbourne Staff concluded the meeting.

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